

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

F-15C, S/N 85-0093 and 85-0098

KADENA AIR BASE, JAPAN

4 OCTOBER 2004

On 4 October 2004, at approximately 1428 local time (0528 Zulu), two F-15Cs, S/N 85-0093 and 85-0098, assigned to the 12th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan experienced a mid-air collision while flying over the Pacific Ocean approximately 103 nautical miles south of Kadena Air Base. Both aircraft were damaged due to the midair collision.

The mishap aircraft were flying as part of a 4-ship scheduled training mission. During an administrative portion of the sortie in clear weather, while acting as a separate 2-ship flight under the leadership of Mishap Pilot 1 (MP1), the mishap aircraft were proceeding to an air refueling area on the eastern portion of their designated working airspace when the mishap occurred. While in a spread formation with approximately 2500 feet of horizontal separation, MP1 banked slightly in the direction of MP2 creating closure which was not recognized by either MP. MP1 impacted MP2 with the aft portion of his left wing tip and forward portion of his left horizontal stabilizer damaging both vertical stabilizers on MP2's aircraft as well as the left wing and left horizontal stabilizer of MP1's aircraft. Following the midair, the aircraft safely recovered to Kadena Air Base. Neither MP suffered any injury as a result of the mishap. No damage or injuries occurred to any person or place other than the mishap aircraft due to the mishap. The total estimated cost of the mishap is \$1,576,484.78.

The primary cause of the mishap, supported by clear and convincing evidence, was MP2's failure to maintain the briefed formation with MP1. Improper task prioritization and channelized attention on non-critical duties by MP2 led to a failure to recognize closure between the mishap aircraft and maneuver appropriately to avoid a collision. Significant contributing factors, supported by substantial evidence, were MP1's failure to clear his flight path due to misperception, task misprioritization, and overall MP distraction due to a developing unbriefed congestion of aircraft.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.